

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Monday, March 9, 2015  
12:30 PM – The Old U.S. Mint  
New Orleans, Louisiana**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Louisiana State Museum was called to order by Chairman Michael M. Davis at 12:30 PM at The Old U.S. Mint in New Orleans. A quorum was present.

Members Present: Jerry F. Adams; Robert A. Barnett; Myrna B. Bergeron; Charles R. Davis; Michael M. Davis; Rosemary Upshaw Ewing; Sharon Turcan Gahagan; Jeffrey Pipes Guice; Janet V. Haedicke, Ph.D.; Kevin Kelly; Aleta Leckelt; William J. Perret, M.D.; Lawrence N. Powell, Ph.D.; Anne F. Redd; William J. Wilton, Jr.; Philip Woollam; and Diane K. Zink

Members Absent: Madlyn B. Bagneris; Allen J. “AJ” Gibbs; Thomas Frère Kramer, M.D.; and Donna Winters

Also Present: Mark A Tullos, Jr., Director, Louisiana State Museum

**Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairman M. Davis called the meeting to order. Regarding the agenda, Mr. M. Davis said he wished to omit the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet point from his Chairman’s report on the agenda related to the VCC appointment. This issue will be discussed at a later date. Mr. Guice MOVED, seconded by Dr. Haedicke, to approve the agenda with the requested change. No public comment. **Unanimously approved.**

**Minutes**

The minutes from the February 9, 2015 meeting were distributed in advance. Dr. Haedicke MOVED, seconded by Mr. Adams, to approve the February 9, 2015 LSM Board minutes. No public comment. **Unanimously approved.**

In addition, the Executive Committee minutes from February 25, 2015 were distributed in advance. The meeting was called to discuss a change regarding the timeframe for exhibition of the Rosewood armoire, which is an addendum to the original donation agreement, approved by the Board on February 9, 2015. The Museum agrees to exhibit the Armoire for not less than 20 years, subject, however, to unanticipated and unusual circumstances that may occur that are beyond the control of the Museum and that make continuing the exhibit impossible. The Museum’s commitment to exhibit the Armoire for a minimum period of time does not preclude the temporary removal of the object for conservation, repairs to the facility or similar matters. Mr. Guice MOVED, seconded by

Ms. Bergeron, to approve the Executive Committee minutes. No public comment. **Unanimously approved.**

### **Chairman's Report**

Mr. M. Davis introduced Sharon Turcan Gahagan. She was appointed to the Board on October 3, 2014 but has been unable to attend a Board meeting until today. She previously had been sworn in as a member and had completed all necessary paperwork at that time.

Ms. Gahagan said she is very excited to be on the Board. She was a Speech Pathologist for many years but just consults now. She resides in Natchitoches and said her community is very friendly and giving. She invited Board members to a fundraiser for the historic preservation of Natchitoches on March 21 at LSM's Natchitoches museum. There will also be a new Clementine Hunter exhibit opening soon at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Tullos said he wanted to lay the ground work for a discussion about tumultuous times ahead regarding the State budget. LSM has 89 staff members at present throughout the Museum system. The majority of staff is located within the Presbytere museum in New Orleans. LSM is a part of DCRT and we rely on them for legal, financial, and human resources assistance. The maintenance crew keeps up the Lower Pontalba building as well and if there is a problem at one of the LSM properties outside of New Orleans, they must travel to make repairs. For a small work crew, they do a great deal. Capitol Park Museum is LSM's largest building in the system. LSM staff hosts many weddings, receptions and government functions in Baton Rouge, but the staff is stretched very thin. In New Orleans, the FOC saves the museum money by operating the 1850 House.

The maintenance staff is on call 24/7 for the Pontalba building. Also, at one time, the LSM had security overage in New Orleans 24/7. Over the next 18 months to two years, it will be difficult to maintain this level of staffing support if further staff reductions are made.

Mr. Tullos distributed his 5-year strategic plan and said it is ambitious, but achievable. He hopes to see a future administration willing to support museums, parks and libraries. We have seen many cuts but remain in a stable position.

Mr. M. Davis asked if any of the Secretary of State museums were slated to come into the LSM system. Mr. R. Davis said he is currently unaware of any attempt to move the museums from the Secretary of State to the LSM system even though this proposal has been floated in the past. Also, there would be issues with any such move since those museums are not accredited and it would be a serious concern if they were transferred to us without adequate funding. Ms. Leckelt asked if there has been a study done which compares our State Museum to other state systems and Mr. Tullos said we are in a unique situation. The New Mexico State Museum has a similar system but with a much larger endowment. Mr. Guice asked if we could take some of those Secretary of State museums and flip them out to private institutions. Mr. Tullos said no, our main goal is not to make money, but instead to educate and enlighten the public. We don't want to cross the line to pursue this type of self-generated fund activity.

### **Collections Committee memo**

There is one incoming loan proposal, which is listed below.

#### **Proposed Incoming Loan**

Lender: Creole Heritage Center at Northwestern State University  
Exhibit: *The Murals of Clementine Hunter*, Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame/Northwest Louisiana History Museum  
Loan Dates: March 9, 2015 – May 15, 2016  
Exhibit Dates: March 21, 2015 - April 30, 2016

#### **Object Description**

Acc. #                Artifact for exhibit

IL08.2015.01    Architectural model of Clementine Hunter House by John Allen LeBlanc

IL08.2015.02    Architectural model of African House by John Allen LeBlanc

Ms. Ewing MOVED, seconded by Mr. Guice, to approve the proposed incoming loan. No public comment. **Unanimously approved.**

### **Irby/Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Barnett said that Mr. R. Davis would like to talk to the Board about Irby helping with funding due to State budget cuts.

Mr. R. Davis summarized the budget presentation (which is attached) he gave to the Irby/Finance Committee. The main points are as follows:

- Over the years, the Office of Tourism has provided financial support for the SHOF since its opening and to offset state general fund cuts for general operating expenses of the LSM
- The Irby balance has grown substantially since 2009, with a net cumulative change of \$1,782,083.91
- The Irby financial projections as of January 31, 2015 reflect a positive year-end variance of \$101,343 with the LSM's requested budget reallocations and adjustments included

Mr. R. Davis said he likes Mr. Woollam's suggestion to supplement funding from Irby for salaries versus utilities. LSM currently has 8 staff vacancies on the State side and those will remain unfilled for now. Mr. M. Davis said the Irby/Finance Committee voted unanimously to supplement the State budget this fiscal year only as per the LSM's proposed request.

Mr. R. Davis said in April, he will be back with a request to Irby for the fiscal 2015-16 year. Details of the request will depend on the cuts DCRT has to absorb for the new fiscal year on the State side. LSM wants to maintain the level of services we currently have and at the same time maintain our level of T.O. (table of organization) positions. Once a position is lost, it is very hard to get it back. Dr. Haedicke asked if it was usually June before the budget is finalized and Mr. R. Davis said sometimes, but for the most part, he feels that by April we will know what cuts will occur.

Mr. Wilton asked how the Irby fund grew so much over the years. Mr. R. Davis said Irby is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Lower Pontalba building, as well as to support the LSM. He said the fund balance increases when revenues (primarily from rental income) exceed Irby operating expenses in any given fiscal year. If the State budget has available funds, state funding is used first to meet LSM obligations in order to preserve the Irby fund balance. Mr. R. Davis said the LSM Board has two primary areas of responsibility: Oversight of the W.R. Irby Trust and the LSM collection. Mr. Barnett also commented that the Irby Committee and LSM need to be mindful of the intent and purposes established by the Irby Trust.\* The board approves an annual Irby Budget and Museum staff administers that budget.

Mr. Wilton MOVED, seconded by Ms. Ewing, to approve the LSM's proposal as presented by Mr. R. Davis requesting Irby to help offset a portion of the current fiscal year budget shortfall, adjusted as requested to reflect an increase in personnel services to be offset by the elimination and equivalent reduction for LSM utilities. No public comment. **Unanimously approved.**

### ***Friends of the Cabildo Report***

Ms. Burke gave the report.

The FOC volunteers gave 276 hours of their time in support of the Museum during the month of February.

Retail business at the 1850 House shop was on par with February of last year, due to Mardi Gras and the short month. The good news is that business for March is about double last year.

The FOC has six houses and 1-2 courtyards confirmed for the FOC spring home tour on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The FOC is planning a special patron's party the evening before at Feelings Restaurant, which has been graciously donated by its new owner, Tony Marino. For those who may not know, this restaurant is housed in a charming 19<sup>th</sup> century Creole cottage that has long been a favorite hangout of French Quarter residents and even a few uptowners.

As of March 1<sup>st</sup>, the FOC membership has increased to 1,103 with 300 at the Executive level or higher. Last year, the membership was 1,083 with 234 at the Executive level.

### ***Louisiana Museum Foundation Report***

Ms. Maclay gave the report.

For the fiscal year to date, the LMF has expended a total of \$570,764 on various Museum programs of which over half at \$238,722 has been on exhibits, \$130,332 on Collections and \$79,205 primarily on marketing and \$122,506 on their program support.

The LMF has administered 27 contracts on behalf of Museum programming at a total year to date value of \$244,686.

**\*The revenue derived therefrom shall be used for the upkeep and maintenance of the property and for the general purpose of the Louisiana State Museum." (Mr. Irby's Will, November 23, 1926)**

The LMF grants program is changing a bit, with the Museum planning to take a more proactive role in putting their own program grants together, but Susan said she can't really provide more detail at this time, as she needs to fill the LMF's Board in first.

However, a good example of the new direction is the way Jennae Biddiscombe in Natchitoches found sources, wrote and secured two grants for the Clementine Hunter exhibit opening in Natchitoches. The Foundation reviewed the grants, submitted them and they administer the funds.

There have been 28 LMF supported Music at the Mint programs this fiscal year. With the loss of the staff person who booked the music groups, there won't be as many programs, but the Foundation will take a more active role in keeping the program going, albeit at a reduced level.

The LMF has four LMF board openings so far for their Nominating Committee. She requested that if anyone has any suggestions, to please let her know before this Thursday; however, please keep in mind that to be on the LMF's board there is a minimum financial commitment of approximately \$1,500 per year between membership dues and gala tickets.

The next LMF Quarterly Board meeting will be on March 26.

The LMF is planning a gathering for the New Orleans delegation of Legislators at the Mint to educate on the need for the music exhibit. Representative Jeff Arnold and Anne Redd have offered to take leading roles to get invitations out, which will need to be done before the spring session starts.

There is still time to join LMF so the members of the Board can attend the LMF's annual meeting on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at Brennan's on Royal Street. The menu sounds fantastic and will include Brennan's signature classic Banana's Foster.

#### ***E.D White Historic House Report***

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, there will be a plaque hanging ceremony for William Peltier, who donated the money for the kitchen.

#### ***Wedell-Williams Aviation and Cypress Sawmill Museum Report***

Mr. Stark said that the Cypress Sawmill Festival in Patterson will take place on April 10-12, 2015.

#### ***Capitol Park Museum Report***

They are getting ready for a busy spring with legislative events, school groups and weddings. June 6<sup>th</sup> will be the Friends of Capitol Park fundraiser.

#### ***Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum Report***

The opening reception for the Clementine Hunter Murals exhibit will be March 28th.

Mr. M. Davis asked Mr. Stark to send these days in writing to the Board.

Mr. Tullos reminded the Board that they can find an up-to-date calendar of events for all properties on the LSM's new website at [www.louisianastatemuseum.org](http://www.louisianastatemuseum.org).

## **New Business**

Ms. Moore said the commercial lease for the Lower Pontalba is in good shape and should not be difficult to update. Mr. Barnett has appointed a Sub-Committee (Ms. Zink as Chair, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Barnett) and Ms. Moore will work with the Committee and LSM staff to see if any issues need to be added to revise the lease.

Dr. Powell said when he got the news that the Museum's reading room would only be open on Thursday and Friday by appointment only, he was very upset. Both members of the Louisiana Historical Association (LHA), as well as the Louisiana Historical Society (LHS) expressed their concern as well. The LHA had an annual meeting recently and expressed their dismay in a letter.

In addition, a motion was made at the LHA meeting as follows:

“Resolved, that the Board of Directors, as well as the general membership of the Louisiana Historical Association expresses profound concern over the diminishing access to the Louisiana State Museum's Louisiana Historical Center.”

Dr. Powell said he feels it would send a terrible message if this were to happen.

Mr. Tullos said on February 27th, mid-year State budget cuts forced the LSM to immediately and unexpectedly cut back hours of the Reading Room to Thursday and Friday by appointment only.

After a thorough re-evaluation of our resources and options, LSM has decided to restore the hours of operation which existed prior to the reduction, effective April 1st. This means the Reading Room will be open Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and from 1-4 PM, and by appointment on Friday.

LSM is crafting a long term plan for the Reading Room, which includes enhanced hours of operation and improved service to researchers.

Mr. Barnett reminded the Board to take the online Ethics class and fill out their Tier 2.1 Financial Disclosure form by May 15th. The form can be accessed online.

Adjourned at 2:15 PM.